

THE REAL HOLY SPIRIT



CORTLAND MYERS

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THE REAL HOLY SPIRIT



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The Real Holy Spirit

By

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To
one greatly beloved by HIM and by me,
The Rev. WALTER IRVING SOUTHERTON,
The author

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I

THE REAL FAILURE

THE greatest reality in the world to-day is the Person and the Power of the Holy Spirit. The greatest unreality in the world to-day is the Person and the Power of the Holy Spirit. This strange contrast stands side by side with the sad failure in the Christian Church and the Christian Life. The minister of Christ is disheartened, discouraged, dissatisfied, disappointed, because of failure, but the failure is his inability to make real God's great reality. It is in his creed but not in his conviction. It is even in his teaching but not in his life. Blessed is the hour of recognition that the one supreme fact and force is the Holy Spirit, and this can be made practical and personal in every life. But almost universally it is

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impractical and impersonal and mysterious and unreal. One of God's chosen was enveloped in this fog, and when it partially and temporarily lifted he was imprisoned in a fence of interrogation marks. He recognized the truth of Scripture and the great necessity, but it invariably revealed the mark of the unreal. He read the statements of others, and heard the strange experiences of the few, and his life was barren of all this. But at last in the desert wanderings, thirsty and weary, he stumbled upon an oasis—grass and palm trees and sweet water. It was drink from the fountains of God. It was refreshing, and life from the gardens of the upper world. He said in that hour, "Why not make it real?"—"Why not take this out of the clouds and place it right down on the earth and in every-day life?" Discover the conditions and fulfill them, and then live the great reality. This is God's

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intent for you. It was morning. A new day and a new world. It dawned upon him that he had just as much right to claim the Holy Spirit as the man who carried the saintly and oftentimes sickly appearance ; that he who was most of a man was most fitted for the divine indwelling ; that the Spirit of God wanted to use every faculty of the individual man ; he must retain his humour and humanity as well as his holiness, for they are a part of this "Wholeness." It was a revelation to know that God wanted to use the man just as He had made him and that He could use wit, as well as wisdom ; that He could use a happy disposition better than a holy dissipation ; that a minister who was called sensational might be most deeply spiritual, and he who preached a practical Gospel, preached the most powerful one ; he who pushed his way in the thickest of the fight against sin and wrong might know more

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of the Holy Spirit than the man who was self-righteous because other people called him a saint and who tried to look, if not to live, the spiritual. Our great failure is in relation to the Holy Spirit, but misunderstanding may be more the cause of the failure than either the lack of desire or devotion. There is no part of the Christian religion so hidden in the fogs of unreality. In this centre of truth the mists are densest. Here is the long night and deep darkness, with occasional stars in the sky, but for most Christians no dawn of morning with its flood of light. There is not one nominal Christian in a thousand who has grasped, with any personal appreciation, the great fact of the Holy Spirit. Is there one church in a thousand which could justly claim that it was a church of the Holy Spirit? We have splendid equipment in men, money and machinery, but here is the startling failure. The question asked once

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could be repeated in the churches all over the world, "Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?" And some must answer, "We have not so much as heard of the Holy Spirit." We are in ignorance and weakness because the greatest of truths is covered with unreality. We can understand other things, but not this, grasp other truths, but not this, make the Christian life real, but not this part of it. The most important is the most unreal. We cast it aside, and yet this is the one supreme necessity for life and service. The answer is not in the mystery of the truth itself any more than in other parts of religion and life. The spiritual is with us. We know it ; we can grasp it and live it. We do live it. It is the larger part of life. While we can more easily understand the things we can see and touch, yet this does not prevent us from making real life out of this highest and best. That which has the

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most to do with each day, even in the material world, is oftentimes least comprehended. We are wise and practical enough to use other forces which we cannot explain. The main question in regard to this greatest truth of the kingdom of God is not one of understanding or explanation by processes of human reasoning, but rather of our practical and personal use. Wisdom will ask only for the conditions, and consecration will fulfill them. Then every man has the right and duty to claim the result. This unreality has been caused largely by false statements and false life, not by revelation or impossibility. We think of this as mystical and intangible, but other things are not so matter of fact as we imagine. The greatest experiences of life are just as far from description and explanation. Music is an exaltation and the sublime and beautiful an inspiration, and worship an aspiration, and no part of

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life is more normal and natural than this. We possess spiritual sensibilities and they are capable of an awakening and an uplifting for all life. We cannot throw these things into a crucible or place them under a scalpel ; they are not to be measured or defined, but they are very real and very beneficial. They are so fundamental in our lives that they are the response of the soul to the soul of all things. We relegate the best and most important to the mystical. But many things, which may now seem dreamlike, will by and by appear as the moving powers of the world. So the operation of the Holy Spirit is most natural and most normal and must be made most real. Many extremists and fanatics have discouraged or disgusted normal Christians. A minister arose in a gathering of his fellow ministers and made wonderful statements of startling experiences and the miraculous baptism of the

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Holy Spirit. He had journeyed a long distance to one of the summer gatherings where the teachings concerning the spiritual life are emphasized, and there the great event in his life took place. The Holy Spirit came upon him. His frame shook and it seemed beyond the possibility of endurance. He distinctly felt the Spirit go from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot as he was "filled," and the Scripture had been fulfilled. He gave the details of these feelings, most of them physical, until other faithful ministers were disheartened because no experience like this had ever been theirs and possibly they had no right to claim the divine presence and power. Some one who knew this baptized individual whispered to his neighbour, "He ought to have such a baptism every hour of his life. He is the meanest man in his family, and a destroyer of churches. He has rarely kept a church more than one

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year, and injured every one of them." He, and many others like him, in this day have received the impression that these spiritual Meccas could give a man the Holy Spirit, and that the Christians who made the journey received the blessing. It is not a question of geography. It is a question of life. It is not a question of physical feeling, or momentary exaltation. It is a question of God's best for every man who will fulfill plain, unmistakable conditions, and live the real, normal man's life. A company of ministers met every week at night and remained awake all night to pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Some apparently less holy ministers slept their best at night and worked their hardest all day. Those who branded themselves with sainthood and were the receivers of the Holy Spirit by virtue of this nightly vigil are not in their churches now and were not signal successes at that hour.

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The others are in the same fields doing the best work of their lives and saving a great number of their fellow men. No condemnation need be made upon any honest effort to receive this best of God's gifts for to-day, and the great essential for Christians and churches. But this remains unquestionably true that many of these things in assemblies and in individuals have covered the truth concerning the Holy Spirit with unreality and almost separated it from ordinary life and work. This is increased by the fact that, in most instances, the results in service do not tally with the pretenses in experience. Every sincere Christian and every faithful church would rather have the power of the Holy Spirit than any other blessing God can give. They are seeking, as never before, for the real Holy Spirit, and He is waiting, like the boundless and fathomless ocean, to roll its mighty tide against the streams

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of the human and lift the shallows into great depths and change the turbulence into stillness and fill the channels with His own divineness, until life has come to its best, in being “filled with all the fullness of God.”

II

THE REAL FACT

THERE is a small village in the heart of the mountains nestling under the shelter of the hills by the side of a beautiful lake called "The Smile of the Great Spirit." The Indians were so near to nature that they knew to name it almost by the touch of inspiration. It is His Smile. I rested in this mountain home for weeks. It was near the borderland of perfect rest and peace. At least, some of the glory and quiet of that other world had swept across the boundary. I walked its roadways and picked its flowers and listened to its bird songs and loved its silence. One morning I climbed the mountains which towered above the village towards the clouds. On the summit the vision revealed the homes and valley

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and lake and mountain and touch of God, in such beauty that I said, "I never saw this place until this morning." I had only caught glimpses and knew the separated parts. Now the altitude revealed the combination and the perfection. I had seen fragments of the mosaic; now I saw the completed work of the Creator, "the smile of the Great Spirit." But the days had passed, and only in these last hours I made the discovery and now I must leave. Most Christians live all their days in the valley and imagine they know life at its best. They do see and feel, they understand and experience Christianity, but it is fragmentary and disconnected and unsatisfactory. Most followers of Christ never climb to the summit, where the reality is discovered and God's best revelation is made. To know Christian life and Christian service, we must go to the mountain top of Christian experience, which is the reality of the

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Holy Spirit; not in the mists or clouds, but just as near as we can get to heaven and yet have our feet on the earth. "The smile of the Great Spirit" is God's gift to man. His Holy Spirit to live in them and work through them, this is the consummation of His revelation and His redemption. This is at once the supreme element in life and the supreme question in theology. It is of more vital and practical importance to every individual believer than any other question in the world. The Holy Spirit is the great reality of the Scriptures. He is mentioned many times in the Old Testament, and in striking relations to men. He is represented as coming upon them, working through them, but working from without or from above. In the dawn of Christianity a great change takes place. He is so much more important, and His method is so different. He lives in the Christian and works from within. This

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living, abiding fellowship is so wonderful that we have hesitated and doubted and made it unreal, at least for ourselves. The personal indwelling of the divine Spirit is the distinctive glory of the Christian dispensation and the Christian life. When the forerunner of Christ was preparing the way, his message concerning Jesus was twofold, and one part was quite as important as the other. We have failed to explain it or to emphasize it, but John the Baptist knew the secret and was faithful in its revelation. Christ was "the Lamb of God who was to take away the sin of the world." But He was also to "baptize with the Holy Spirit." The *blood* and the *baptism* were both the great essentials. They were inseparable. There was no Gospel without both of these central truths. God was to do one with just as much necessity and certainty as the other, but because we more quickly apprehend one

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than the other, we naturally neglect the one not so easily understood. The sacrificial and pouring out of blood was more visible and outward. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit was the spiritual, and therefore not so readily grasped or made the practical reality. He who was to baptize His followers with the Spirit was here their example, as in all other parts of His life. He was begotten of the Spirit. He grew up in the power of the Spirit. On the threshold of His active ministry and as a reward of His obedience, the Holy Spirit came upon Him with a new inflow of power, something beyond that which He had yet experienced. He is anointed with the Holy Ghost, and a new consciousness seems to have been His. In the hour of temptation this was put to the severest test and Jesus comes away from the wilderness prepared to baptize with the Holy Spirit. He lived His life ; He performed

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His miracles; He arose from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. One of the oft-repeated and most emphatic parts of His teaching and that which was taught at the most impressive moments was this great reality. He understood it and we must understand that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the culmination and the glory of Christ's work. He distinctly and repeatedly told His disciples that this was their supreme privilege and their only hope of victory. This was so true and so important that it was necessary that He go away in order that another Comforter come who could live in them. He told them not to venture a step until the promise had been fulfilled. He urged them to wait for the promise of the Father. They were doomed to failure unless they should tarry in the city until this great reality should be experienced. He had taught them this many times by lesson and by life that this

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was the one resource even to the certainty of putting the words in their mouths and driving the shadow of fear from their pathway.

The power was to come when the Holy Spirit was come. They were to be the courageous-conquering witnesses. He told them this was so real that it was not they who spoke but the Holy Spirit. He would bring all things to their remembrance and guide them into all truth. He was to accompany every witness and every utterance and do the work of conviction and of regeneration. So sacred was this truth and so important in its relation to their lives and to His Gospel that He uttered concerning it that startling and solemn statement, "Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness." This is the indelible stamp placed upon no other truth in the Bible. So real and so vital was the work of the

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Holy Spirit to the world's redemption. The last and best thing Jesus ever did for His disciples was when He breathed on them and said "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." All His work for them and for the world found its realization and fulfillment in Pentecost. This is the historic fact. To grasp the mysteries and the niceties of the matter need not trouble us. This is the history. Here is the fact. It has only one interpretation and cannot be bowed out. The legacy of Jesus is Christianity's great utility and reality. The supreme question was here answered, "How could the Father dwell in men even as He dwelt in Christ?" The very Spirit who made Bethlehem possible now came and dwelt in the bodies of sinful men. This is the greatest marvel and the greatest reality. Everything else was in preparation for this wonderful consummation. The disciples had known the bliss-

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ful experience of having Christ with them. His life was with them yet outside their own. Now it was the blessedness of His personal life within them. The very Spirit of God's own Son as He had lived and loved and now glorified was to be their personal life. The promise was abundantly fulfilled to these disciples on the day of Pentecost and they were equipped for the apparently impossible task. The miraculous was real and the wonders beyond all expectation, but this was only the outward and visible. The great reality was the change in the disciples themselves. The transformation of weakness into strength, of ignorance into wisdom and of fear into courage. It was a baptism of real power such as mankind had never witnessed or experienced. There is no chapter of human history which has such a grip upon life, and the deep things of life, personal or social as the story of

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Pentecost. The only explanation of Peter and his sermon, of Stephen and his life, of Barnabas and his sacrifice, is that the most wonderful event in human history had now taken place. The only real thing in all the world to these disciples was the unquestioned fulfillment of their Master's promise and beyond all anticipation. Not an interrogation mark did any one of these ever place against it. They made it plain to themselves and to their immediate followers, that the Holy Spirit had come for the purpose of fulfilling Christ's work, and their only hope was in Him. The sermon preached in the power of the Holy Spirit invariably commanded men not only to repent but to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. These truths were inseparable. If one was real the other was just as real. So great was this emphasis and so evident this reality that the Acts of the Apostles might just as well be called the acts of the

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Holy Spirit. The proof of conversion was in the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the natural question of all was, "Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?" This was to be the universal experience, and when Saul of Tarsus opened his blind eyes and changed his name, this was the first requisite. He must receive the Holy Spirit; and no follower of Jesus ever proved the great reality by word and work more emphatically and effectively than he. Through him God spoke the word of command to every other man, "Be filled with the Spirit," and in variety of expression repeated the statement of Pentecost that "the promise was to you and your children and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord your God shall call." So real is this that we must consider the astounding fact that in God's intent our very bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit—that we cannot pray with-

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out the Holy Spirit—He makes intercession for us, and so earnest that He does it with groaning that cannot be uttered. It is folly if not blasphemy for any man to pray who does not pray in the Holy Spirit, or rather the Holy Spirit pray in him. Neither can we worship without His aid. In a very real sense He brings the heart in right relation to God and removes the barriers to this highest act in human life. For “the true worshipper worships the Father in Spirit and in truth.” “God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.” The declaration of Scripture also is that “we worship by the Spirit of God.” We cannot even read our Bible without this reality. The one unique fact concerning the Bible and the man who reads it, is that the Holy Spirit is in both. It is His Book. The reader must be His man. There is no more fatal error in the world

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than to ignore or neglect this. The word cannot unfold its meaning or give its life to any man except as the Spirit within accepts and appropriates it. Much of study and preaching is in vain, because of failure here. We think if we only know correctly and exactly what it means then will come as a consequence the blessing the word intended to bring. Not so. The word is a seed to which the soil must be adapted. We may hold doctrines of Scripture most intelligently and even earnestly and know nothing of their life and power. This was the serious defect in the religion and life of the Jews, and Jesus constantly reminded them of it. We have more light and are more guilty. This is our feebleness of service and weakness of character. To understand any book the reader must know the same language as the author. He must even have some of the same spirit as the one who wrote. To under-

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stand and secure the blessing of the Scriptures we must have the same Holy Spirit as those who wrote the Book. The power of the word depends upon a man's living fellowship with Jesus through the indwelling Spirit. No man can come to the Bible with an unclean heart or an evil temper or an unholy purpose. No man can come to it with an animal life, no man can come to it with raging passions and understand these truths which belong to the higher nature, and the very nature of God. The heart must be in right condition, as the astronomer polishes his glasses and keeps his instruments in order for work. Pride and jealousy and arrogance and selfishness and covetousness and self-conceit are clouds and mists, before the telescope of the soul. The Bible is to be read by the heart. The pure in heart only see God. The natural man cannot behold the things of the Spirit. We must

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experience spiritual things in order to understand them. The lower can never understand the higher. There is a witness of the Holy Spirit. It is for you. Be ready. Wait, listen, not by scholars' reason, but the Christian's heart. This is the great fact to reckon with. "When He the Spirit of truth is come He will guide you into all truth."

What astounding provision for every necessity in Christian living and service! The very divineness and blessedness of it may blind us to the every-day common practical reality of it. Our shame is in the doubt and hesitation before God's best. Our sin is our refusal. Our loss is the tragedy of life. We live like the old man who owned three hundred acres of land. He was poor almost to starvation with this nominal possession. One day some men appeared and surveyed the surrounding country. They asked him his price

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for his poor land. He sold it for \$1 an acre. Out of that very land millions of dollars have been taken and are being taken to-day. It seems to be unlimited for there is one of the richest mines in the world. The average Christian is starving on the surface of the richest mine in the universe of God.

III

THE REAL FAITH

THE sand-storm swept across the desert in Egypt. It blinded our eyes and almost placed the sun in hiding. It was a rain of finest sand, blown at terrific rapidity from the desert and over the valley of the Nile. With great difficulty we found our way from the lower levels up the slope to the height of the old citadel guarding the city of Cairo. Here we were lifted above the storm and under the clear sky. Almost immediately the hurricane died away, and in the silence the beautiful river like a bright coloured ribbon on the garment of the Queen of Nature combined with that valley of emerald glory and the delta of rarest richness in harvests and verdure to make a picture never to be taken from the gallery walls of

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memory. Most Christians live on the border line of the desert and are blind in the sand-storms. They never know the highest and best. Blessed is he who hastens up to the citadel of faith and catches a glimpse of the possibilities and glories of a life with the Holy Spirit, the indwelling God. Is this second part of a Christian life as real as the first part? Is it obtained by practically the same means? There is an emphatic affirmation to all this. Any one who can believe for one part of his Christian life can believe for this other part, and with equal assurance. Why not believe in the Holy Spirit for His blessing the same as we believe in Christ for His blessing? There is just as much reason and certainty for the one as for the other. If I can have faith in Jesus Christ to save me I can have faith in Him to fulfill His promise. One is just as sacred to Him as the other. It ought to be just as real to

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me as the other. No less is demanded of me in receiving Christ's pardon than there is in receiving Christ's power. Why not hold the same relation to one as to the other? Believe and you shall be saved. Believe and you shall be Spirit-filled. Every man must come into the Christian life by faith. Every Christian must come into this larger life by faith. It will be the dawn of a new day in many a troubled heart to recognize this elemental truth. There is no greater mystery or impossibility concerning the one than the other. He who can be saved can and ought to be filled with the Holy Spirit on the same condition. If there is reality in one there is the same reality in the other. Just to believe and to act accordingly. The winds have blown across the mystery desert and we have been blinded to this similarity and simplicity. There are different experiences in conversion. As many shades of differ-

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ence as there are individuals, but this does not affect the reality. There is the same variety of experience in relation to the Holy Spirit, but the central fact remains the same. If one man can tell of a marvellous and miraculous and momentary conversion that does not destroy the reality of the conversion in the sacred silence of the soul with so much of the gradual and so little of the wonderful as to make it impossible to fix any definite time for the change. It is sufficient for any one to know that he has passed from death unto life, even though he cannot mark off the moment of the great transition. These contrasts in receiving Christ into the heart are recognized everywhere, and in the failure to reckon with them there has been many a danger and a disaster. We have been mistaken and misled in relation to this second part of God's gift. The experience of another has been made a standard and a

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false standard. This is the cause of one of the greatest misunderstandings and losses in human life. We need not condemn the man as fanatical or false who passes through a definite, positive, unmistakable experience of the new life in receiving the Holy Spirit. Undoubtedly this is as true as his conversion, more true than in any other part of his life. So real that there is not the shadow of a question mark to be placed upon it, but I shall not be conditioned by his experience nor by his geography. It is not a question of longitude or latitude, but of living my personal life. My faculties and my disposition and my whole make-up enter into the consideration. I must come to the Holy Spirit with the same manhood and the same faith with which I come to Christ and with which I meet every other part of life. If I am to be myself in one place I must be myself in the other. If faith is real in one sphere it

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must be in the other. It is blindest folly to relegate this best to some other part of life or some other man's life. A personal experience in conversion demands a personal experience here. It may be sudden. It may be unique. It may be gradual. It may be common. But the method is not the important feature. Is it a fact? Has the open heart a right to claim it? Has faith the substance to make it real? Barnabas never had the experience of Peter, but both men were filled with the Holy Spirit. This may have been a greater reality to them than their conversion. It can be to us if we will only fulfill the conditions and take God at His word. Faith is the one faculty of our nature by which we receive the divine. There can be no other. This is the spiritual necessity. If it could have been otherwise God would have made it so. We know the Father by faith and the Spirit in our hearts is His gift

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through Christ, and we must have this by faith. Just to look up into His face with His promise upon our lips while faith opens the heart's door and lets the Holy Spirit fill every nook and corner and call it His temple. Then to live. Just to live as if this was the greatest fact in life. Every believer must have had some relation with the Holy Spirit in the hour of his regeneration, and in a certain sense the Holy Spirit is his possession always. Faith accomplished this. The same faith will accomplish the other and larger relation to the Holy Spirit. The shallowest faith demands that we act as though the one were true. This deeper confidence makes the same demand. The disciples received the Holy Spirit when Jesus breathed on them in that last holy hour. But they waited in faith for the full baptism of power. This waiting was the test and the perfection of their faith. They simply believed and cultivated the quiet

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assurance, they kept thinking and saying, "The Holy Spirit lives in me." The great reality did not come all at once for them. It will not for us, but step by step, and acknowledging the conviction the goal will be reached when the heart recognizes in deepest gratitude its possession of the Holy Spirit. Why not ask this like every other prayer and in the same certainty as the forgiveness of sin, with the same assurance as our daily bread? More ready is God to give this than a father is to give good things to his child. Amazing promise pushed up against the human heart at its best, a father's love for his child. "More ready." How can the child of God question this? He ought not to even look in his heart for feeling or light. It may be cold and dark. He is simply to believe and just rest in what God is doing. Fix the soul in silence and give the Holy Spirit time to deepen this assurance. It is pre-

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eminently true here that "We walk by faith," a faith which believes even when the least evidence of His working is not seen. Restfully and trustfully to count upon the reality, and in that faith to yield up the whole being to His dwelling and His use, to His complete rule and mastery. This faith is not merely the conviction that God's word is true. It is rather the spiritual organ of the soul, it is the habit of the soul, it is the life of the soul, so that we come to say, "I live by faith." It is through this channel that the Spirit can enter in His fullness. The Christian wastes his time in praying for the indwelling Spirit. He is there, but the holiest prayer breaks from his lips when he asks for the spiritual perception of the fact and the experience of its fullness. This prayer and this experience need not be once for all. There are special hours and there can be special anointings and new manifestations of His presence

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and power. Pentecost was the beginning, but the disciples had a repeated experience. The heart of Peter needed a refilling, and I do not wonder. I only wonder at the miracle of his life. He had the Holy Spirit and he was yet a coward. He was filled with the Holy Spirit and astounded the world with his courage. What was true of him can be true of any man who believes it, or, better, receives it. It is a receiving, a taking, an accepting. This is faith in action. We know how to receive other things, even spiritual things. Why not the best? Why not open up every part of the whole life to the Holy Spirit? Give Him the right of way and act accordingly. The soul may be saved apart from this second blessing. For the New Testament Christian was asked if he had received the Holy Spirit since he believed, but it is far from the Christian privilege and far from God's desire. The most

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wonderful thing in Christianity or in human life is the consciousness of the indwelling Spirit of God in all His fullness and fellowship. We should accept forever the fact that we have received Him, and press on to know the secret of His fullness. This is it : the same faith by which Jesus is permitted to save us ; He is permitted to baptize us with the Holy Spirit ; no condition or circumstance can rob the soul of God's best. We have faith to believe it for others. We should now believe it for ourselves. We should believe it for the ordinary as well as the extraordinary life. We should believe it in its relation to every day and to everything. We should grasp the promise with its high privilege as the most wonderful and most practical part of life. We should begin to make it real in practice, by thought, by conviction and action. To live as though it were true and the greatest of truths. To treat its mystery

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like every other mystery, but never forget its reality. If faith is real then our relation to the Holy Spirit is real. If faith is practical in any other part of life it is practical here. Every minister can write his sermon and do all his work in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Every business man can transact his business in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Every mother can carry the burdens of the home in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Every child of God can come out of the valley and live on the mountain top if he will only believe. It is his to have something more than ordinary men. Something more than the angels in heaven. It is his to have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in all His divine fullness. It is wicked to doubt, or to make an exception of ourselves, or to thrust this great blessing out of our reach, or to permit mystery to destroy reality. There is no impossibility here and no impracticability

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and no favouritism. It is for every follower of Christ, and yet even His ministers, the larger part of them, are mechanical drudges in their holy service because faith has never grasped God's meaning for men. "Have ye received the Holy Spirit?" ought to be asked of every candidate for this sacred office and an intelligent, conscientious answer be demanded, and the manifestation of it be witnessed in the life. Away with the impression that this is for the few, or for the man in special work, or for some one marked as a saint, or the individual who has had a startling experience. It is for every man, who by faith grasps the promise to believe that he is filled with the Holy Spirit and to live in harmony with that stupendous fact. "Believe" and "receive" and "wait" and the like are all practical words, and we can thrust them right into everyday life, and work and live.

IV

THE REAL FIDELITY

OBEDIENCE is the one word above all others which carries in every letter the sound of the practical. There is no mistaking or escaping the reality of doing His will. This is the larger part of the great secret "If ye love Me ye will keep My commandments and ye will pray the Father and He shall give you another comforter even the Spirit of truth." That "If" must be written in capitals for it is the necessary condition in receiving the Holy Spirit. "Whom God hath given to them that obey Him." This is the way out of the maze into the open of life's peace and power. In one of the tropical countries we walked into the fragrant and fruitful garden in the early evening hour and in the bright moonlight.

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We passed through an entrance into a vast maze of evergreens with its miles of narrow aisles and high walls. These winding, confusing walks ran in every conceivable direction and with no apparent ending. We wandered through this labyrinth with no guide and no one to ask the way. At last weary and almost ready to abandon hope of finding the way back to the open gardens, a friendly voice was heard, and soon the stranger appeared, almost like an angel guide. And he said "Follow me." With quickened step we followed the new leader around countless corners and circles and at last through the gateway into light and liberty. Many a Christian wanders into this religious maze and makes earnest efforts, sometimes almost frantic efforts, to find his way out, but only circles around and walks deeper into the darkness and the difficulty. There is a way out into life, real life, the

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life of the Holy Spirit. It is the way of obedience. To listen to His voice and to hasten His way and to walk in His footsteps. This is not a puzzle and we need not stay in a maze. This is practical, intensely practical. Every man knows what it is to obey and he knows when he is obedient. There is no necessity for deception here. He has the right to claim the Holy Spirit when he has fulfilled the condition and is living an obedient life. We make other conditions or permit others to make conditions for us when the promise rests upon simple obedience. It is not even necessary to increase the imaginary difficulty by a special religious and spiritual vocabulary and talk about consecration and surrender, and other much misunderstood expressions. The four-lettered, simple, easily understood word "Obey" is sufficient. The earnest seeker after truth and the Spirit of truth

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can grasp the meaning of this and thrust it deep into life. Real fidelity is the companion of real faith and they walk either side of the child of God and reveal to him the great truth concerning the Holy Spirit. A Christian business man became exceedingly troubled concerning his barren life and at last determined that at any cost he would know what it was to be filled with the Spirit. He abandoned his business for a time, shut himself in with his Bible. He prayed fervently and constantly for the Holy Spirit but failed to find his answer. Finally one night he heard the crying of a child. It is true that it was in a dream that he heard it, but to him it was very real. Some one tapped on his door. It was an angel, and the angel said to him, "Do you hear that child crying?" And he said, "Yes, but I first must be filled with the Spirit before I can do anything." The angel left him. After a while some one

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else tapped on the door. It was the Lord. He said, "Do you hear the cries of that child?" And he said, "Yes, but I can never serve until I am Spirit-filled." And the Lord said, "Go and relieve the cries of that child, and you shall know what the Spirit-filling means." When he awoke the law of God was plain. If obedience is better than sacrifice it is better than most of the foolish means adopted in order to be filled with the Spirit. There can be no question that Christ made obedience as the condition of the Father's giving and our receiving the Spirit. This is true in the beginning. It is increasingly true all through life, the Holy Spirit is in us to make us obedient and it is only as we yield in obedience, implicit and constant obedience, to Christ's commands that we can experience His conscious indwelling and know the meaning of being filled with His

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Spirit. Agonizing prayer and every other effort are failures apart from an obedient life. When I am conscious of obedience to the best of my knowledge and ability, I am just as conscious that the Holy Spirit is living in me and working through me and filling me with His divine presence and power. What can be more real than this, to believe, to obey, to have? This simplicity has been passed by and many a sincere soul has wandered in search of something never to be found. The jewel is in our pathway and instead of seeing and seizing the treasure we pass it by or trample upon it and even hide it from others. Our Lord said more of simple obedience in His teaching than of anything else. He said the law must be more completely fulfilled. He said that He Himself came just to do the will of God. After a life of obedience for thirty years His first word was "Thus it *becom-*

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eth us to fulfill all righteousness," and then He was baptized with the Spirit. There can be no question concerning this strange fact that the Spirit came because of His obedience, but this was not sufficient. More startling yet He went on learning obedience even through suffering and reached the limit of this fidelity at last on the Cross. After this it was His to give this best blessing to His disciples. The fullness of the Spirit was and is the reward of obedience. His first followers learned the lesson and gave their loyalty to Him as Lord and Master and then expected and received this divine life. To listen to the voice of conscience and to make earnest effort to keep the commands of Christ is the proof of love and the preparation for the Holy Spirit. This is the real plan and the real promise and the real privilege. Even if we do not reach our ideal the Master who witnesses the whole-hearted

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effort and the faithful attempt will not withhold the blessing. Conscious of an obedient spirit I can be just as conscious of the Holy Spirit. No man with a saintly look or a strange experience or even a wonderful work in the kingdom of God can rob me of my personal possession and assurance. A real obedience will invariably and inevitably reveal a real Holy Spirit. This is the most important place for emphasis and cannot be given too much attention. The obedience of love must precede the fullness of the Spirit and just as certainly the fullness of the Spirit must follow. The most grave source of error is seeking the blessing before rendering the obedience. Much blame for this must be attached to the almost universal Christian teaching. Freedom of grace and simplicity of faith without the insistence on absolute obedience and the life of holiness. We may have imagined that only

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those filled with the Spirit could be obedient. It is rather the obedient heart which makes room for His indwelling. Obedience drives out sin and self and makes the temple ready for His holy life. To rise in the power of the Spirit already in us to live an obedient life, is to be able to claim His divine promise. The Holy Spirit was sent specially and only to the obedient and to make His life theirs and to make it a conscientious reality, to make it possible for him to do the very works of Christ and even greater. We need to remember that God is found only in His will. That the very angels could not live with Him when they became disobedient. That if we are to live with God in the power of His Holy Spirit, or rather He is to live in us, we must first do His will. How easy it passes over the threshold of the lip, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." A red-hot ploughshare running through the

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roots of the garden could not be more blasting than this answered prayer to human nature with its appetites and lusts. To open the doors of the chambers of the soul and in sincerity say, "Come in, Spirit of God, and Thy will be done in here" would make a revolution to most life nominally Christian. To stand in the home or in business or in society or sometimes even in the church and to utter that sentence with the heart and the understanding would be to stumble in the expression and to startle us into silence, but this is necessary and because it is necessary it is practical. If this was necessary for Jesus Himself how much more for us? Every movement and moment of life must be brought into submission and allegiance to the Master. Then His promise is our real life. He intended the Holy Spirit to be much more to us than we have ever yet imagined. It is the stigma upon Chris-

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tian life and the tragedy of living that we have failed to obey and to receive. To have the Holy Spirit in all His fullness and power need not be something for the chosen few or something abnormal or mysterious. It can be the possession of every obedient life and be made the greatest reality. We ought to keep saying to ourselves, not to others, "I am living in the obedience of love and I know I have the Holy Spirit." We must not continue to merely believe in the possibility, but in the actual possession. "Be ye holy" is the same in practice as "Be ye filled with the Spirit." One is just as much a command as the other. There can be no mistake about the one, why need there be about the other? One is real for every day and for every man, and so is the other. The opposite of this is just as true. No one who lives a selfish life, who has a miserly, covetous, envious,

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jealous spirit, who is harsh and critical, who is controlled by some subtle secret sin, who is cold and unscrupulous, who does not control temper and appetite, who does not constantly cry "Create in me a clean heart, O God" and immediately answers his own prayer can expect to be filled with the Spirit. It is utmost folly to claim that some past experience or that some long continued prayer performed the miracle. It is not true. It is evidenced by the life and only by the life. How do I know I have the Holy Spirit? How do I know a tree is a pear tree? The universal law. By their fruits ye shall know them. There are distinct fruits of the Spirit. Obedience receives the blessing and obedience reveals the blessing. When God commanded them to build a holy place for His dwelling amongst them, they built it just "as the Lord commanded." To make this under-

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stood forever, in two short chapters of the Bible that expression is used eighteen times "as the Lord commanded." It was in this house built as the perfect expression of His will that He came to dwell. God finds His home to-day in the human heart where His will is done. He dwells only in the atmosphere of obedience. The one secret of the marvellous achievement in the world of material forces in recent years is the secret of obedience. The inventors have not understood these forces only in a very limited way. The explanation is simple. Men have discovered certain laws which control these forces and they give implicit obedience to them and secure the result. We cannot understand the spiritual, but every man can obey. We know the commandments and that is quite sufficient for love. Obedience is the reality of the wireless telegraphy. It must be the reality of the Holy Spirit life.

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God's promise is exceedingly practical. It respects conduct and character rather than personality. Every man can make it personal by coming into certain states of character and conditions of life. To have His will—as my meat and drink—is to have His Holy Spirit, but when we serve Him reluctantly, feebly and fitfully, we have no claims upon the promise. We live a hard life, a starved life, an unhappy life. To be ready for the gentlest whisper of command and the faintest voice of conscience is to throw the heart doors wide open for His coming, and He always comes. This was the second part, and perhaps the most necessary and the most real part of the waiting days before the wonders of Pentecost. Their obedience was put to a most severe test by the continuous waiting and waiting in darkness and wonder. They were commanded to wait and they manifested the sublime

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faith of obedience to that last command. During those same days there was being wrought into every fibre of their being the spirit of absolute and constant obedience. There is no brand which was burned so deep into their hearts as this. It was forever their distinguishing mark and they carried it through persecution and death. Fidelity was their victory. Alas, faithlessness is our failure. We are infidel because we are faithless. Faithlessness is the meaning of infidelity. We are without the power of the Holy Spirit because we are disobedient. This can be taken out of the mysterious and unreal by walking in the pathway of His will. To obey is to receive. We can know this just as we know other things and with just as much reality and just as practically. It was the early morning hour of a clouded day. A day which came freighted with more than the ordinary and it seemed to carry the

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impossible. The one thing which had to be accomplished, if all the other duties were passed by, was the making of the sermon. That was the great part of the minister's life anyway, and now it was the last of the week. On every page of blank paper in front of me I saw the word "must." I hastened to the desk behind a locked door; I had just bowed my head in prayer for the Holy Spirit, when immediately there came a gentle rap, but a busy sermon maker must not answer. Then another and a louder, but no answer. Then a call. There was some one at the telephone. An anxious messenger,—she was dying and wanted to see me. It was five miles away. What could I do? What could I do? What would become of the sermon? Instantly it flashed across the hesitating refusal, this must be the call of my Lord. He knows where the holiest service is to be rendered.

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I abandoned everything and hastened on this new errand. A half day gone. Other calls came. The whole day gone. But I said that which I had the right to say, I am perfectly obedient and I have the Holy Spirit. This is His day. The sermons are His and all other duties are His to work out. The next morning dawned with such an experience in sermon making as was never mine ; I had two sermons instead of one and two sermons which He used marvellously in helping and saving others. They were His sermons. He can use no other. Conscious of obedience and then conscious of the Holy Spirit, then conscious of new possibilities in life. This transforms the ministry and all Christian service and changes drudgery into delight.

V

THE REAL FAME

THE mission of the Holy Spirit must be the mission of the individual who is filled with the Spirit.

His work is to glorify Christ. Simon is still living. His subtle secret enemy is still working. Most desire for the Holy Spirit is stained or saturated with the desire to glorify self. Sometimes unconscious, but always a deadly poison to kill life at its best. There were never so many Christians recognizing the need of the Holy Spirit as at this hour. There never were so many anxious to receive the blessing as now, but if this apparently holy desire was analyzed the discovery would be made in most instances that it was a selfish desire and personal glory was the unworthy ambition. Men want the Holy Spirit in

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order that they may become famous for achievement or sometimes the greater folly and failure that they may be famous for saintliness. No Pharisee ever received such condemnation from the lips of Christ as this modern unholy holiness specimen. This tainted desire for the Spirit of God is more than a blunder, it is a blasphemy. "Why do I want the Holy Spirit?" is the searching interrogation which should be rigorously and relentlessly pushed against the heart. A sincere earnest answer would in most instances uncover a selfish personal purpose. The one who is in any degree seeking his own glory and aggrandizement renders it absolutely impossible for the Holy Spirit to work through him. "He shall glorify Me" is the clear and unmistakable statement concerning His office in the world. He can do no other. The moment I seek my own glory I thwart His purpose and hinder His filling me with the

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divine life. This can be made very real. Every one can know for himself what is the real object of his search. There need be no mist or fog about this. Why do I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Do I want Him for the same reason that He wants me? Is it self or Christ? This ray of light will drive away the darkness and mystery and reveal the heart just as it is. In most cases it is an astonishing self-exaltation. James and John never were filled with the Spirit until they had learned this important lesson. Then they became ashamed that they had ever asked for self-honour.—To sit in His throne in the glory.—When they forgot themselves and in all humility sought His glory the Holy Spirit wrought through them the wonders of the kingdom. What a contrast in life and service this would make for most followers of Christ to-day. This would be the mountainside with its perennial fountains of

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peace and power. The old well in time of drought quickly ran dry, then the singing, sparkling brook in the centre of the farm was used, but that sometimes ran too low and occasionally did not run at all, but there was a spring a mile away in the side of the mountains, purest water, clear as crystal, this never failed. We could always go to the spring in the hills and drink from the very fountains of God. Most Christians live around the well and have many a dry season with parched lips. Many others find the stream of deeper happiness and more useful life, but they fear and falter and fail. The few know the way up the side of the mountain of everlasting truth and everlasting strength and joy. The spring in the eternal hills is on the height of complete self-abandon, and to experience the joy of doing everything for His sake. To be filled with the Spirit by being filled with this supreme and all

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controlling motive. In the passing away of King Arthur, Sir Bedivere was commanded by the king to go to the shore of the lake and to draw from its sheath that far famed Excalibur and in the light of the winter moon to hurl it into the deep waters. He hesitates, then gazes at the sparkling blade and its gem-bestudded hilt. The diamonds and topaz and jacinth light dazzles his eyes and captivates his heart. His selfish desires controlled and he thrusts it in hiding in the water flags and returned to the dying king. His sovereign said, "Hast thou fulfilled my command which I gave? What is it thou hast seen or what hast thou heard?" Sir Bedivere was bold and quick to reply. "I heard the ripple washing in the reeds and the wild waters lapping on the crags." Rallying his dying energies the king exclaimed: "Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy name. I charge thee quickly, go

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again, cast the sword away and watch." He goes again to the shore of the lake and draws from its hiding-place that priceless possession. In his own conceit and self life he argues his case and hides it again. On his return to the wounded king, he receives the same piercing glance and pointed question, "What hast thou seen and heard?" He hesitated and at last replied, "Again I heard the waters lapping on the crags and the long ripple washing in the reeds." Then again came the king's reproach and reproof. "Miserable, wicked, untrue, unknightly traitor-hearted, thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt." This was more than Sir Bedivere could endure. He rushed out of the king's presence and down the hillside into the reeds and in complete self-surrender to the wishes of his king he seized the sword, trembling and tearful, but determined, he hurled it through the air and flashing in

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the moonlight, it falls into the centre of the lake but lo, just as it fell a snow-white arm arises from the water and grasps the famous hilt and swings it thrice, then draws it back into the lake. Now the greater miracle. Sir Bedivere is a new man in a new world with a new spirit. The sacrifice was wonderful but this was eclipsed by the second experience when he carries the dying Arthur upon his shoulders to the shore and together they see the holy vision and hear the voice from its midst: "The old order changeth yielding place to the new and God fulfills Himself in many ways." This all would have been lost to himself and his world if he had kept the famous sword and sought his own glory. In the surrender were the triumph and the new life. There was no other way. The soul must be purified if God comes in. Here is the great barrier to the Christian's highest experience.

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There must be an empty place before there can be any filling. To be filled means first to be emptied. To be filled with the Spirit demands the departure of the last atom of self-seeking and personal glory. The Father glorifies Jesus in heaven. The Holy Spirit glorifies Him in the earth. The Christian heart is a channel through which this glorifying of Christ is accomplished. To glorify is to reveal the true value. The only glory of Christ is to be what He is. The Holy Spirit is to reveal Christ just as He is. This He does. He makes Christ glorious to us and in order that this could be done it was necessary that Christ should go away from His disciples. He could not be there in the flesh and in the Spirit both. The spiritual indwelling was most important and could only be universal. He could neither be glorified in heaven nor in us until He gave up His earthly life.

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Many men now believe in Jesus and follow Him and love Him but never get beyond the first stage of the disciples' experience. They have never grasped the meaning of the Holy Spirit's coming and His coming in them. The condition of this spiritual life and power is the consistent and consecrated coöperation with Him in His one work of glorifying Christ. The least hesitation, or hindrance, or hidden motive, means failure. It is the mockery of divine wisdom and even divine necessity to expect the Holy Spirit to live with self-seeking. We must get away from "knowing Christ after the flesh," if we would ever know Him in the power of the Spirit. This would make the heart's door turn on its rusty hinges, and swing wide open if we could say, "Even though we have known Christ after the flesh yet now know we Him so no more." It is only the Spirit can glorify Christ.

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He takes the things of Christ and declares them unto us. He does not do this as a matter of knowledge but as a personal experience and possession. He gives it to us to partake of the Christ life and thus to reveal His glory to others. This too is stamped with reality. We can grasp this and live it. It will destroy much and much that we hold precious, but blessed is the man who loosens his grip on the self life and courageously hurls it from him and gives the Spirit of God a chance. No one questions the reality of Paul's experience. He was filled with the Holy Spirit but only because he could say "For me to live is in Christ." No man ever breathed who was more anxious to glorify Christ. Christian workers now want the Holy Spirit in order to make a name for themselves or they are anxious for the feeling of joy and peace which is promised. We must be more concerned about the ful-

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filling the conditions of the promise and God will take care of the fulfillment of the promise. It is not feeling or even faith. It is the great fact of the Holy Spirit's mission with which we must reckon first. There is a giving on our part before there is a giving on God's part. "Give Me thy heart and I will come and live in it," is His answer to our desire. Do we make the sermons and render the service and speak the word and fill our office and give our money in love for Him and for His lost ones without any desire for praise or self glory? Can we say always I am willing to fail if He can be glorified. This is our only hope of being filled with the Spirit. The messenger of the Master must always stand in the shadow of the cross and never show himself while his Lord is being exalted before the eyes of men. One of the saddest sights in this world is the vision of a minister seeking his own fame in preach-

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ing the Gospel of Christ. Yet this is not the exception. Ministers are more than most other men slaves to the desire for fame. Seekers after degrees and honours and office and robes of sanctity to cover up rags of selfishness. This is the Spirit of Christ, "I came not to be ministered unto but to minister," and the Spirit of Christ and the Holy Spirit are one. It is very plain. It is exceedingly simple. It can easily be made the most real part of life. Any man can know his motive. If it is wrong he can change it. If it is the supreme motive then he can be filled with the Spirit. The great failure is here. The refusal to surrender and to know only Christ and Him crucified. His glory must be stamped on every word and deed and thought. Know thyself. Do not be deceived. There is no other way. Self must be driven out before the life can be filled with the Spirit. This is the path-

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way to real fame. Any other is only over the desert towards a mirage. The Christian's fame is wrapped up in the same bundle with the fame of Christ. His glory is our glory. Some day we shall share with Him the triumphs of eternity. There is a beautiful story told of Titian, the great painter; he met a young man whose gift in the direction of art seemed to be unusually promising. He urged the young man to give up the idea of winning fame in a military life and to devote his talents and his energy in painting. After the young man had laboured for a long time upon a painting in which he was ambitious to make his name famous, he came to a point where he felt that his genius failed. In despair, the young man threw down his brush. Titian met him weeping, and did not ask the reason, but going into the studio, he realized that the young man had felt that he had reached the limit of

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his genius. So Titian took up the brush, remained at work through the night and finished the picture. The next afternoon the young man came back to the studio, resolved that he would try art no more, and as he entered the door, there, upon the great easel, was his finished picture. He knew at once, instinctively, that the great master of art, Titian, had completed his design. With tears coursing down his cheeks he said, "I cannot abandon my art. I must continue for his sake. He has done so much for me I will forget myself and please him. My master's fame is my fame. I will paint and do my best." To-day his pictures hang side by side with Titian's on the gallery walls of the world. The Master has done more for thee. His fame is your fame. Give Him your best.

VI

THE REAL FORCE

THE use of material force has revolutionized modern life. The most striking characteristic of this miracle working material force is that it is so immaterial and mysterious. In its varied forms it is so real and yet so unreal. That which may have most of practical value we know least about. Our ignorance is no barrier to our advantages. We light our cities and run our machinery and move our cars and in reality change our world by electricity and yet the very genius who throws the harness upon this swift steed and snaps the traces fast to the chariot of civilization confesses his ignorance more than other men. He knows the fact of the force and the laws of its working but that is practically the limit of

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his knowledge. His fellow men know less but they listen and live and never question the reality. These great world forces are akin to the spiritual and beyond explanation but not beyond the every-day use of the every-day life of the most ordinary men. Its value and its reality to him does not depend upon a complete understanding. He makes it real to himself by personal and constant use. To send a message in human language across the ocean without any visible medium, with no carrier seen by human vision is no less mysterious and wonderful than the working of the divine Spirit in the lives of men. Why make His power any the less real or any the less usable? All power can be appreciated and made practical but not describable. How, what, where, and a thousand interrogations can be thrust against it without any answer. Its nature and form and movement and measure no human wisdom

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can tell. "What is power?" might be asked of the sunlight and the lightning and the magnet and the steam and their kind and the silence is only broken once by the voice, "Power belongeth unto God." This secret, silent, supernatural force in Christianity is its supreme element. If it is eliminated then it is impossible to fulfill even the Christian promise or principle. Without the Holy Spirit living in men and working through them Christianity is a mere system of ethics and philosophy and its hope is an iridescent dream. This divine force in the world's redemption and in the life of individual men is the one supreme reality. This is ours not to comprehend or to explain but to live. One of the last words of the Risen Lord to His wondering and weakening disciples was, "Tarry ye in the city until ye be endued with power from on high" and for increased emphasis upon this most important truth

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He afterwards said, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you." He did not make explanation but He was very positive concerning the power and the result. The tried and trembling followers had heard from John of the baptism of the Spirit. They had heard from Christ about the Father's giving and the Spirit and on the last night He had told them about the Spirit living in them and doing His wonderful work of convincing and witnessing and comforting. Now it was theirs to believe and obey and thus be the channels for the glorifying of their crucified Lord. They were to be witnesses but the understanding was that the Holy Spirit was to witness through them. They were the conductors for the greatest force the world had ever known. His work of comforting and teaching and sanctifying them was but a means to an end that they might glorify Christ in rendering effective service for men

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and conquering the world for Him. There could not have been made a more unquestioned demonstration of reality than in the work of the Holy Spirit in these men. They were completely changed themselves and they turned the world upside down. There can be no explanation made of them or their work other than that the Master had fulfilled His promise to the letter. Every man of them retained his personal characteristics and yet he was another man. There is only one answer, "He was filled with the Holy Spirit." That which was their experience and the peculiar mark of all Christian history and the one secret of every great man's work in the kingdom of God can be ours and with just as much reality and just as much effect. It is not a question of feeling any more than conversion is a question of feeling. It is a question of fact and of faith and of fidelity. Our feeling the power of the Spirit when

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He is working through us is not necessary. Our fulfilling the conditions is positively essential. It may be when the individual feels his weakest, the power is the mightiest. He who gave this one of the greatest tests declared I was with you in weakness, My preaching was in power. The Holy Spirit may hide Himself in human weakness at its weakest point in order to accomplish His divine purpose and give glory only to Him. We need simply to feel our own weakness and not His might. Faith confidently grasps the promise and fidelity fulfills the condition. The power is often lost by waiting in the wrong way. The mechanical arrangement may be perfect, the force may be abundant, but there is no light or motion, the one requisite has not been fulfilled. The contact has not been made. There is a separation. It may be exceedingly narrow, but it must be bridged. Here is

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the fatal and frequent mistake. If we would command Nature we must first and absolutely obey her. It is easy to long for power. It is easy to ask for it. This may not be even a mark of goodness or grace. Who would not be willing or even anxious to have power? But this only comes by being filled with the Spirit, and this only comes when we are emptied of other things, and when the old self is driven out, and His divine self is in complete control. Any man can have the power of the Holy Spirit, but he must have the filling. If he wants to be able to do the works of God he must have God live in him. The power must use him, not he use it. He is not to possess power to use at his will. The power is to possess him. He must live as one given up to a power which has the entire control of life. More than that and in a very real sense lives in him and has complete pos-

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session of the inmost being. To permit the possession is the prerequisite to experiencing the power. To work for God is one thing. To have God work through us is another. We are eager and anxious oftentimes to do the one and make strenuous efforts to do it but we fail. We always will fail at least in enjoying any real success or satisfaction. We must give God a chance to work His perfect will through us. The saving of this world is His plan as well as the power through which it is to be accomplished. He does not want us to plan and worry and work for Him. What He wants is our lives and to work out His own plans through them. To surrender to His will is to open the gate and let the flood rush through and down upon the wheels of life. It is the work of a will, not a wish or a whim, and it may be the work of a moment. There was a waiting for the apostles and some

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of the early Christians and even for Paul, but other men were regenerated and filled the same day and the same hour. The believer may begin to live the Spirit-filled life as soon as he is born again. The life abundantly may be the life instantly. By the same faith which saves us we can live in the confidence that the Spirit of power is within us, and as we will to have Him He works through us for the accomplishment of the one purpose. This must always be reckoned with. The greatest blessing God could give us was not bestowed for any self-exaltation or enjoyment, or to save us from toil and trouble. It is more than that, infinitely more than that. Only he can receive the power from on high who at any cost reveals Christ to his fellow men, and thus glorifies his Risen Lord. This is the kind of men for whom the world is waiting. This is the man for whom God is waiting. Why are we wait-

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ing? Blessed is he who opens up the channels of his life to the power of God. He may come out of a coal mine and shake Wales from one end to the other and make all England tremble, and the round world feel the mighty impulse. The most ordinary of men may be the most extraordinary in the kingdom of God. Every page of Christian history has the lines of this story written in capitals or italics. Here is the emphasis. Sometimes it is written even between the lines. Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit, but not until after Ananias came. Who was Ananias? Some obscure believer never heard of before or after. But the great apostle received his greatest blessing and the source of all his power through the little Ananias. The power is for every man. They were all filled. The promise is to *all*. It was *all* in Ephesus and *all* in Samaria, and *all* in the house of Cornelius, and *all* everywhere.

The Real Holy Spirit

The only hindrance is in the man himself, and in this failure he renders himself perfectly helpless, "For apart from Me ye can do nothing." On the other hand, weakness itself becomes strength and out of the life flow rivers of courage and love and peace and joy. Preaching and power then are the same words. Simon can become a Peter and his sermon be like an earthquake shock or a lightning flash while 3,000 at once rushed through the gates of the kingdom. Every Saturday morning for many years I have read the story of the crucifixion before the daily task of preparation for Sunday. I have read it through my tears and entered into His sufferings and shame in order to crucify my own will and to appreciate and appropriate His Spirit. Many times on reaching the statement that "He saved others, Himself He could not save" I have paused and closed the book and sought

The Real Force

with deepening desire to know that truth and to live it. To live it before I attempted to preach it, to secure this Spirit of Christ before I could claim the power of His Holy Spirit. The one has invariably been to me the pathway to confidence in the other. I claim the right to the power of His Spirit when I have the spirit of His cross. When I have made the one real I know the reality of the other. The only way to secure the manifestation of the electric current is to supply the conductor which its nature demands. The only way to secure the abiding manifestation of the Spirit of God is to supply the conductor of the motive of Christ. To live as He lived and love as He loved. To love others and not self. To live for others and not for self. To make sermons and render every service conscious of His Spirit and then to be conscious of the divine power. If the copper wire does its business this other conductor

The Real Holy Spirit

will just as surely accomplish its purpose. Why not believe it and use it? Why continue to stamp it as unreal and leave it for others? This is for every life and for every hour of life. Some service rendered may cost the greatest effort or a sermon be intellectually brilliant and the result of hardest toil and both alike be only failure. They may be even more than failure; they may be branded as fault. Even human eloquence at its best can never transmit life. This is the purpose of Christian preaching and Christian activity. Ministry of any kind without the power of the Spirit is valueless because "the flesh profiteth nothing." The one necessity is for all, but we must not expect the same manifestation for all. If two lives are surrendered to God and they are filled with the Spirit the experience will depend upon the individual temperament and disposition. God fills the vessels but He also

The Real Force

makes them, and every one is somewhat different from the other. They may differ in shape and size but the same water of life fills them, and to the brim, yes, and keeps them full. The Nile Valley had its drought and the people had their famine for centuries. Now the great reservoir at the head waters of the river furnishes a constant and plentiful flow of water through the long valley and over the delta there is now rich harvest and abundant life. This is the divine provision for the Christian. The power is not spasmodic and uncertain. It is not a freshet with sometimes injury instead of benefit. It is intended to be a steady stream of power through life for the saving of men. Neither Scripture nor experience teach that there is a once for all reception of the Holy Spirit, but rather that there is a continuous reception and infilling. The command "Be ye filled"

The Real Holy Spirit

means "be ye in the attitude of being filled." "Be ye being filled with the Spirit"—moment by moment, any moment ordinary or special wherever and whenever the need presents itself the Spirit meets the necessity. To be filled is to keep filled and be ready for any call for service. Remember if a copper wire will make the power of electricity real a consecrated life will make real the power of the Holy Spirit.

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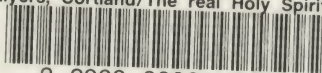
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